# Developing a Wine Tasting Room and Food Event

Sally Cookson, The Winery at Holy Cross Abbey

With Additional Resources from Dawn Thilmany Colorado State University

# Background of Our Winery

THE WINERY
HOLY CROSS ABBET

- First planted grapes in 2000
  - First made wine in 2001 when moved from Napa Valley
- Matt is winemaker, Sally manages sales, events and the tasting room
- Colorado Wines:
  - Wine grapes in every state-only 3% in 47 minor states
    - May be more of a tourism industry than major producer in these minor states

Colorado's wine production ranked 22nd

The Winery at Holy Cross Abbey continues to grow and currently produces around 10,000 cases

#### Setting up a Tasting Room



- Understanding your place and space
  - Canon City and Royal Gorge affect the types of visitors we see, what they are looking for and how we provide good service
  - Operating in a space, such as the Abbey, changes the nature of our tasting room
  - Providing tourist access to a unique place and offering wine tasting as a complementary activity

## Our Facility

- Our building was here, built in 1911.
  - A wonderful example of arts and crafts architecture with a post and beam cross structure, so we opted for an 'old world elegance, that works with the Tudor style of the monastery.
- Remodel or built from scratch, either way I feel its important to bring elements of your surrounding indoors.
- Our walls are brown and green with shiny spackle, our floors are a rustic tile and our wooden floor to ceiling beams, part of the original structure, have 5" copper bands at the bottom.

### Location Stats: Do your Homework

- Most Chambers of Commerce will have some sort of traffic density information.
  - We had to get the info from the state by calling CDOT Public Relations Department at 303-757-9011
  - (Hwy 50 Cañon City-25,900 average daily) You can get this info on their website also, and it is most accurate if you know the mile markers.
- Parking is a big deal-
  - We have many RV visitors, so in every blurb I put "ample parking".

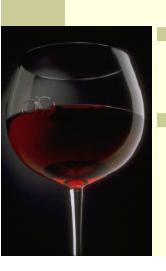
# Merchandising

- Inventory should be significant
  - Provide many opportunities to buy within the tasting room
  - Always be looking at the facility as a customer...what eye level are gifts and purchase items?
  - T-shirts and caps sell..even at a winery
  - Culinary offerings for customers
    - Unique local or international goods, not items that can be found in any shop
- Olive Oil and Vinegar, Magnets, Coasters. Chocolate Bat, Dish Towels, Shirts, Caps, Glasses, Wine opener, Wine boxes, Coasters, Stoppers, Blending Box, Harvest Fest Glasses, Cards and Posters
- Non-logo items-Books on travel, food wine, Picnic back packs, Pottery from Spain, France, Portugal and Poland-not typically Asian, Linens from Provence, Wine accessories, Kitchen Products-UNIQUE

#### Marketing Recommendations



- Staffing: Customer Service is Primary to a Tasting Room
  - Knowledge of wines, the Abbey and community
  - Inclusive of all tastes
    - Knowledge of wines does not equate to making judgment of others' tastes
- Staffing
  - Courteous
  - Knowledgeable
    - Well Trained-our staff trains for 5 days
  - Personable



#### **Event Recommendations**



- Events may provide some of the best marketing and PR you can have for wineries
- Harvest festival
  - Alternative to attending West Slope festival and helped to develop community
  - Driven visitors to the community in the fall
- Partnerships are essential
  - Chamber of commerce
  - Picking good vendors

#### The Day of the Event



- Space Planning
  - Plenty of seating and places for those who like to "settle in"
  - Using activities to move crowd throughout venue
- Serving all Visitors
  - Children activities: Where to Locate and the Types that Work for Wine events
  - Creating "History" for Collectors:
    - Dated glasses, t-shirts, event posters



#### More information:

- Colorado Wines:
  - http://www.coloradowine.com/

- The Winery at Holy Cross Abbey:
  - http://www.abbeywinery.com/